

1608/338.
FIVE MINUTES

A D V I C E

TO THE

P E O P L E,

PREPARATORY TO THE ENSUING

GENERAL ELECTION.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR J. STOCKDALE,

OPPOSITE

BURLINGTON-HOUSE, PICCADILLY.

MDCCLXXXIV.

[PRICE SIX-PENCE.]

FIVE MINUTES



A. D. C. R.

P. B. O. P. L. E.

GENERAL ELECTION

L. O. N. D. O. N.

PRINTED FOR J. STODDART

STATIONER HOUSE, FLEET STREET

PRICE SIX PENCE

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~~pear to see the subject in a false light~~
FIVE MINUTE'S ADVICE

TO THE

P E O P L E.

MY FRIENDS AND COUNTRYMEN,

AS the space preceding a General Election is probably but a short one, every one who exerts his honest endeavours, in this space, to open the eyes of his Countrymen to a view of their real interests, so far has a claim to their candid attention.

The Writer of the following pages is actuated by no considerations, but what he thinks, at least, the Cause

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of

of the Constitution; and if he appear to see the subject in a false light *himself*, or to place it in the same point of view to *others*, his heart is clear of all share in the deception.

The real basis on which the famous Coalition was formed, has been so often made the object of public contemplation, that any new attempt to analyse it, would be superfluous, if not disgusting. The People at large have made up their minds upon it, and have been convinced, that Necessity might be the Patriot's, as well as the Tyrant's Plea. I shall forbear, therefore, as far as *that* measure may be concerned, any retrospective view of what is *past*, and confine my own, and, if I can, my Readers' attention, to what is *to come*.

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The approaching period is not to be ranked among those ordinary Revolutions in our Political System, in which we are too apt to think that some allowance may be granted to the gratification of private views, without endangering the very existence of the Constitution ;—but one of those awful crises, on the virtuous and discreet management of which, the Nation's Happiness must depend.—The question that every Elector should ask himself, before he exerts his privilege of voting, should be this :—“ Am I contributing, as far as the weight of my vote extends, to the preservation of the true and genuine principles of the Constitution ; Or am I, as far as in me lies, using my dishonest endeavours
to

to destroy that equipoize of Power, by which the existence of *that* Constitution is to be determined?"—It has of late been a favourite practice with one party, to circulate a notion, that every deduction from the Authority of the Crown, or the Importance of the Peerage, was so much clear gain to the Cause of the People; and that the permanency and beauty of the *whole* Fabric would be the result of the contraction, at least, if not of the destruction, of some of its parts.

There is nothing new in the promulgation of this idea; it was borrowed from that part of our History, where the subversion of the Constitution, originating from the same principles, was closed with the People's
being

being reduced to extreme slavery. Religious cant was the main engine of Cromwell's elevation; but that, in late times, (as it did not strike in with the humour of the day) was wisely relinquished for the fashionable cant of Whiggism and Revolution Principles. Cromwell was urged on to his Usurpation, as he said, by "a spirit which would not wait the Lord's leisure." That his Disciple has been urged to action, by a spirit less impatient, let the witnesses to his proceedings determine. The event of the Battle of Worcester Cromwell called his "Crowning Victory;" because, by *that*, the King, and the whole Royal Party, were effectually crushed. The successful event of a late struggle would have

have been equally "Crowning" for his Imitator ; and would have laid the Authority of the King and the Constitution equally at the Victor's feet : But the Genius of the Empire fortunately interposed, and prevented the Commonwealth becoming a second time a prey to daring and restless Ambition ! The Modern Usurper might indeed (if he had succeeded) have conformed to our prejudices, by indulging us with retaining the *forms* of the Constitution : The King, perhaps, might have been graciously permitted to have worn a glittering toy on his head ; and the Peers to be still accosted in terms of superior respect ; but these would have been the only reliques of their former splendor ; and the People
(infatuated

(infatuated with a notion of having extended their liberties) would have been soon taught the difference between the Exertion of a *mild* and *legal* Prerogative, and the unlimited Controul of a *desperate* and *unprincipled* Demagogue. Cromwell, to the accomplishment of his measures, was supported by an army of Saints. Here, indeed, the analogy is a little deficient; for no one can pretend to find the most distant resemblance between Lord Sandwich and General Harrison; or between Jack Townshend and Hugh Peters: Lord George, indeed, might have contributed to a similitude in this part of the Picture; but his *political* tenets are so much obscured by his *scriptural* quotations, that one is always at a loss to

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guess,

guess, whether he means to raise his spear against "Saul and his Host," or to "go out with the Lord against the Mighty."

But the same ends have been often accomplished by means extremely dissimilar; and Cromwell's *Saints* might have been equalled, if not surpassed, by F-x's *Sinners*.—If thro' *your* inadvertence, they should be enabled to make a second Irruption, our Political Safety must depend on the same cause which has often saved a conquered army; the making use of that time to rally, which the victorious troops have devoted to plunder:—For at the opening the Treasury doors, the Band too, as well as their Leader, will be too impatient to wait "the Lord's leisure;"—and
be

be too much employed in the division of the spoil, to make use of all advantages that may offer to harass a flying enemy. We are not yet, however, reduced to this sad extremity. The Plunderers are yet on the *outside* of the walls; and it will depend upon you to keep them so. How near the Citadel had been surprised! How near the Executive Power had been transferred to impious hands, you all remember, and tremble! But for one fortunate event! *Et actum erat de Republica*—Private possessions would have been as insecure as the *Public* Treasure;—*Right* and *Law* would have been but frail barriers against such Assailants as *Power* and *Necessity*; and instead of repining or remonstrating at what

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their

their rapacity would *seize*, you would have been soon taught a lesson of thankfulness and submission, for what their generosity might *leave*.

Figure to yourselves, the two renowned Leaders of the Party, in this kind of conference, before the attack. “ ’Tis twelve years since we have made the State the victim of our *diffentions*; ’tis time now to make it the victim of our *Union*. I have at my nod, says one, a chosen band, a phalanx which never flinched; all fed by my hand, and obedient to my voice.” — “ I have (says the other) a phalanx too; not overfed, indeed, but extremely well taught; all Croats and Pandours; a light troop, totally unencumbered with either fortune or credit, that wait only *my* signal, to
advance

advance and attack—Havock! be the word!*—All the Realm shall be in common; in Cheapside shall my palfry go to grass; and when I am King, as King I will be; I will apparel all in one livery, that they may agree like brothers, and worship me their Lord. After such an explanation, my Countrymen, should you trust much to the validity of your Parchment Deeds, or to the strength of your strong boxes? Or would you found a claim to a *part*, on the readiness with which you surrendered the *whole*? To the lovers of peace, the opulent, and industrious, such a state, therefore, can have nothing alluring; those only can thrive in it, who have dissipated their means by vice and prodigality; or those who have

* Jack Cade. H. 6.

have no trust but in anarchy and confusion, to save them from being forced to disgorge the Public Plunder, as the means * *Quo flagitium aut facinus redimerent.*

As much has been said of the unconstitutional manner in which the present Ministry was formed, shall we for a moment advert to it?— You have been told, that a Peer, unplaced, and out of Parliament, has no legal authority, either on the King's requisition, or voluntarily and unasked, to offer Advice to his Sovereign. This is a Constitutional Question, and can be solved, therefore, only by historical precedents. Bracton, one of our earliest Writers on Law, speaking of the Peers, says, they may be properly called *Con-*
fules,

* Sallust. Catil.

*sules, a consulendo Reges enim tales
 affociant ad consulendum, Counsellors, for Kings call on them for their
 Advice:** And this Advice they might constitutionally offer, individually *as Peers*, either in or out of Parliament. In the Impeachment of the two Spensers, part of the Accusation against them was, "That they, by their evil Covin, would not suffer the Great Men of the Realm, the King's good Counsellors, to speak with the King." Something like this, in the late Reign, was also objected to Sir Robert Walpole; but now, by a strange perversion of matters, the "evil Covin" is transferred from the *Withholders*, to the *Givers* of wholesome Counsel. Yet the King's asking the Advice of a
 Peer,

* Coke Litt.

Peer, has been brought forward as the fundamental and sufficient reason for a subsequent string of the most unprecedented Resolutions that are to be found in the Records of the English Parliament.

The Appointment of Ministers, is by the Law solely vested in the King. Now, to suppose that he should have the sole right to nominate, and yet that he might at any time be compelled to recede from that nomination, without any reason given, is to suppose a positive contradiction: For a power subject to such restrictions, must be a nullity in itself; and, therefore, could never have been the subject of legal contemplation. The very essence of the Executive Power, it must be remembered,

membered, is its Unity ; for it could never be attended with vigour and dispatch, were it lodged in many hands, or subject to many wills. The altering that Unity, is to make the *Deliberative* Power arrogate to itself the *Executive*, and by one stroke, to demolish the frame of the Constitutional Fabric. 'Tis true, that every Political System, composed of various parts, allows, as it were, a certain degree of vibration among the balancing powers ; an accession to, or a diminution from, any one of the constituent parts ; and yet the System retain enough of its original principle, as to remain secure :— But when the vital, the essential part of any one of the constituents is annihilated, from that moment

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the

the whole is dissolved. We have no confidence in your Ministers, say the Commons to the King; and therefore we require you will *dismiss* them. You have not condescended to inform me, how they have forfeited your Confidence, says the King to the Commons; and therefore I shall certainly *retain* them. What is this, but an attempt to snatch the Sceptre out of the King's hand, and to make him a Non-entity in the Constitution? For it must be observed that the Controul affected by the Commons, was not merely confined to a Negative; not only to whom the King *should not*, but dictated, according at least to every rational inference, whom he *should* have for his Ministers. And in order to palliate

liate this violent proceeding, it has been asserted, that nothing but the transcendent abilities of one of these *would-be* Ministers, could save the State from ruin. I am willing always to sacrifice, in some degree, to Popular Opinions; but still with a reservation of the right to myself of canvassing these Opinions, when they strongly militate with my own. Before, therefore, I can acknowledge that the redemption of the State must depend on this Individual's ruling it, I must be convinced that a country, exhausted by war, groaning under a load of debt, and distracted by internal broils, may yet be saved by no other help but the "mighty magic of the tongue." Where are the Treaties he has framed? The Alli-

ances he has formed? Where are his plans of *external* Commerce, or his schemes of interior Police? Shall I be referred to Mr. Sheridan's Regulations for Westminster Justices? Or to Mr. Burke's Reform of the King's Kitchen? When I ask for the Plan by which the Nation is to receive atonement for Lord North's squandering an hundred millions, am I to be referred to the beggarly savings of small beer and farthing candles; or am I to allow that the sins of the Ho—ds, the P—ls, and the R—y's, are expiated by a paltry sacrifice of cooks and scullions? I will say nothing of Lord D—y's retaining a sinecure, which, by the by, had been proscribed by this Bill; for his Lordship must *eat*; besides, there

there may be gratitude in the case; and the fleecing of the *Friend* might be compensated by the munificence of the *Minister*.

I will not suppose, my Countrymen, that it will require much argument to convince you, that the talent of Haranguing should no more be the chief recommendation *to you*, in a Representative, than it is to *me* in a Minister. Integrity of character should be the indispensable requisite in *both*. 'Tis absurd to suppose, that men who hold themselves bound by no moral obligations, will ever conscientiously discharge the duties of *either*. Nor will you, I hope, look for your Delegates in brothels and gaming-houses; among bankrupts in honour and in fortune. Those
only

only can extricate the Nation from its difficulties, whose interest coincides with the interest of the State; who, having a share in the *cargo*, cannot be indifferent to the welfare of the *ship*; men who have steered clear of any slavish submission to the Crown, on the one hand; or any violent encroachments on its just rights, on the other. These are the people to whom you must look; not among Tories and Republicans, but among men who are convinced, that the vigour and stability of the Constitution must depend on the well-poised action of all its parts; that look on every aggrandisement of any *one branch* of the System, to the prejudice of *either* of the others, as an event big with danger to the *whole*.

Mr.

Mr. F—x allows there is a *mass* of good sense in the People of this Country: The time probably is at hand, when there will be ample cause for its exertion. Beware of Quacks, for such are abroad; and when you hear any of these Parliamentary Mountebanks haranguing on the virtues of their GRAND PATRIOTIC ELIXIR, do as I once heard a shrewd country fellow advise his friends, who were standing round a Quack's stage at a fair,—“Keep your mouths shut, and your hands to your pockets!”

AN ELECTOR.



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